

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT

PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes of December 1, 2021

The meeting was held at the Community Room of the Brown Public Library, and was also streamed via the Town GoToMeeting account for the benefit of those unable to attend in person.

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 pm by Chair Hill-Eubanks.

Roll Call: Present for the meeting were Commissioners Laura Hill-Eubanks, Nancy Peck and Aaron Rhoades. Chandra Blackmer attended remotely. Also present was Clerk Mitch Osiecki. Ruth Ruttenberg joined the meeting remotely at 7:30.

Set/Adjust Agenda: No adjustments

Bellemore Road: Brief discussion of the discontinuation of Bellemore Road.

Zoning Bylaw Review:

Brief discussion of section II.14 (Planned Unit Development). General agreement that this section can use an update. Mitch will inquire on Zoning Administrator's forum to see if there are communities happy with the language they've adopted.

Also on PUDs: Currently, there is language requiring that future PUD's "shall" include an Affordable Housing component (may need to update to come into alignment with state law).

Ruth would like PUD review process to clearly state what role the Conservation Commission has with respect to oversight of some elements of the project (energy use, for example). Could add to section 2b.

Brief discussion of the section on Appeals. For what it's worth, appeals of decisions of the ZA are fairly rare.

Section II.16 Fine amounts are out of date.

Article III – Adoption of Bylaws, Amendments, Interpretation and Effective Date

PC would like to explore whether other communities have had success in regulating the accumulation of junk on property. Another question for the ZA forum?

Article 3 – Nancy Peck edited to add several terms that need definitions.

Also, the bylaws currently include two sets of definitions; there's one set following the floodplain section and another at the back of the bylaws. Confusing and creates potential contradictions. Should ensure the definitions are consistent. And consider consolidating to single set of definitions.

Section 4.03 -- Home Occupations

Home Occupations are referenced in a couple of different places in the bylaws. Should ensure that short-term rentals are clearly and consistently regulated. A consultant may be able to offer advice about best practices.

4.03 C includes a reference to regulating signage, but references Section 4.12 – should be 4.14.

4.03 E has some clumsy language – needs revision.

4.03 F includes reference to “character of area or neighborhood.” Should ensure language is clear and supports the current goals of the Town Plan.

Next month: Pick up at Section 4.04 Existing Small Lots.

ZA Update

Mitch gave a brief overview of pending permit applications heading to DRB for review.

PC Updates

- No word yet on MPG application.
- Budget - in future years, ZA should consult with PC before submitting a municipal budget request. Zoning & Planning budget includes expenses of the Planning Commission and Development Review Board.

Approval of Minutes: Aaron Rhodes moved to approve minutes of 11/3, with a couple of minor edits; Nancy Peck seconded. **Vote to approve: 5-0.**

Next Regular Meeting: January 5, 2022 at 7:00 pm.

Adjournment: Nancy Peck moved to adjourn; Aaron Rhodes seconded. **Vote to approve: 5-0.**

Meeting adjourned at 8:52 pm.